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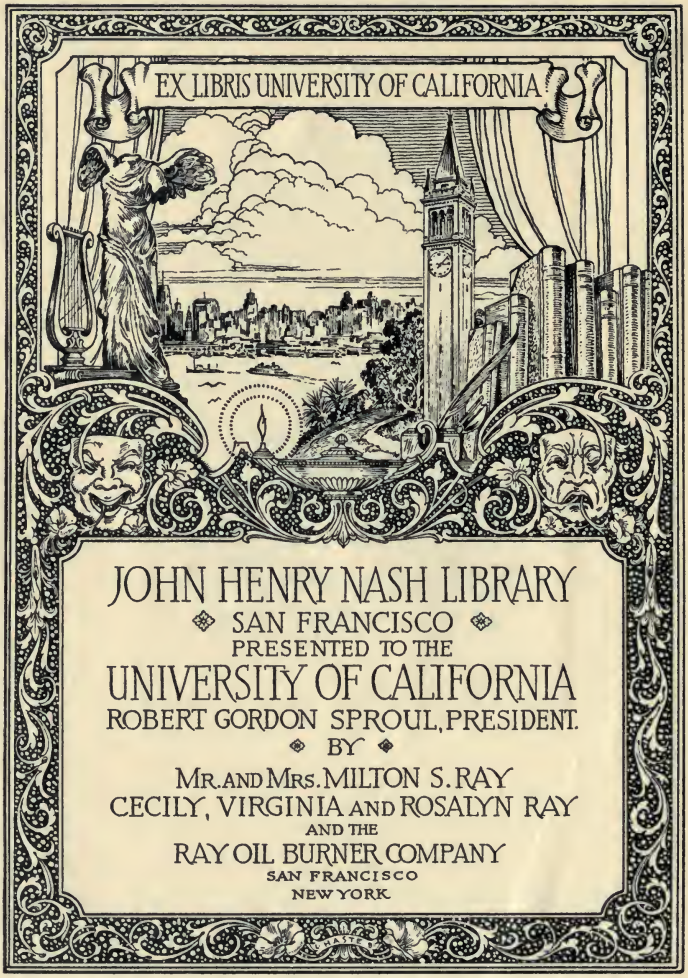

THE IORIO BROCHURE

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Adrian J. Iorio

and his

BOOK PLATES

Printed at the

TROUTSDALE PRESS

and Sold by

Charles E Goodspeed

BOSTON 1903

ADRIAN J. IORIO

THE pictorial ex-libris, as a rule, reveals, or is intended to reveal, the beautiful in book-plates. How much nicer it is to affix a handsome label by some good artist to our books than to add a poor armorial or unsightly name label. Every day, perhaps, if we all look at our treasures that often, one might open the leaves of some book, and meet this example of the artist's best thoughts, a forerunner of the treats in store in the volume.

Many people decry the pictorial plate and think a name label or some other monstrosity should be used as being more dignified, so they express it, but it is in the nature of most men to beautify all that comes within their reach, or at least attempt it, and what more fitting than a pretty plate setting forth the ownership of a volume in some beautiful manner?

A great many of the pictorial plates are alle-

gorical, which is urged against them, but they may be bookish too; there is no end to the possibilities of this style, but there is a limit to the label or armorial and this is quickly arrived at.

A number of times I have heard the remark made, in fact it has been addressed to me in connection with some one of my plates, What has this or that plate to do with books? Perhaps it may have been some plate on which there are no books scattered in disorderly array on a table so that if they were not drawn there they would fall off, but it is not necessary to have the foreground filled with books, nor to have some one reading a book; a great many artists think that in order to make a book-plate they must have some sort of a figure reading a book; that is all right, but it is not essential, in fact, the reading figure has become very threadbare. Although I like a plate that is bookish as well as any other, yet I feel that the book-plate, being essentially a personal mark, should be allowed to depict the tastes, thoughts or pursuits of the owner in whatsoever form his fancy may dictate.

If one would spare the time to look over the work of several book-plate artists, it will be found that about all those who keep to the pictorial style, work in black and white, and any remarks that apply to one might do equally well

for most of the others. However, there are exceptions to most rules, and Mr. Adrian J. Iorio is the exception to this; his work showing a perfection in the pictorial style, combining beauty and gracefulness with strength of treatment in a manner that is seldom met with.

Many plates, even some made by prominent artists, while they may be artistic and correctly drawn, still fail to hold one's attention owing to a weakness in not bringing out the central feature of the design, or, perhaps, having no central feature, at least that can be discovered.

First and foremost a book-plate design should have a story to tell, and tell that story well, as, if we are to depart from the label, pure and simple, the result is bound to be more or less a picture. Now a picture is well enough in itself, but to make that picture answer to the requirements of a book-plate it must needs be something that we can connect with the owner's thoughts of his books in which the plate is to be placed. And here we have, I think, a good excuse for a bookman owning several plates. A book-plate that seems to be wholly musical really does not fit in a book on fiction or war, so some of the more fortunate have a number of personal plates, made with the express purpose of being placed in a certain class of books, while others, made

more general in their scope, carrying a decided bookish flavor, or an armorial nicely worked up would be applicable to almost anything in the way of books.

Mr. Iorio has recognized the principle mentioned above and has sought to carry it out as far as possible. The plates to his credit are few in number but exceedingly beautiful in design, skilfully handled, and good types of what a decorative label or pictorial plate should be.

The plate for Arthur B. Harlow was the first Mr. Iorio made under his own name, and is the mark of a bookman who is interested in philosophy. The first plate of the writer is a beautiful piece of decoration. Nearly everyone remembers, though perhaps vaguely, the great interest and awe awakened in one's childish mind by armored knights, dashing chargers and the like, and it was with this in view that the plate was designed to go in my collection of children's books, fairy tales, and so on. My second plate is freer in its treatment, but still very decorative, a seated figure with book on knee, communing with nature. Juliet Marguerite Washburn has a plate of which she may well be proud. It is one of the handsomest and most appropriate I have yet seen. It depicts a female figure resting against a book standing upright, with pen in one hand

and scroll in the other, at one side a harp, all of which denote the owner's pursuits. William Arthur Peabody has an armorial design very decorative in its treatment. The design used for a printing mark by The Charles E. Peabody Co. was also intended to be used as a book-plate, a copy being shown herewith. It shows a griffin standing upon two books, with a quill grasped in its paws, and on the open page of a book the name, as also the motto, "Lux e Litteris."

Mr. Iorio's own plate is one of the most beautiful of all that he has made, and it looks as if he had tried to make for himself a design that would be a shining example of what he can do, although each succeeding plate from his hand shows an improvement over the previous ones. His plate has a full length figure of a knight in armor, resting on a shield, on which are placed the insignia of the artist, and suggestions of a love for music, with the hill of wisdom at the back. The whole is on a sheet that is drawn to represent a piece of ancient paper, worm eaten and torn; a novel and pleasing mode of expressing the antiquity of the book-plate.

In addition to the above, there are three other plates by Mr. Iorio that should not be passed over without some mention. That for the Troutsdale Press, printed in colors, is designed as a simple

decoration, bearing a heraldic lion, used as the sign of the Press, and the Universal Book-plate, made for a book publishing concern, has as a basis a conventionalized rose tree. The other, for Ada Marie Ivers, shows a female figure in Colonial dress, engaged in a task dear to all feminine hearts, the trimming of head gear, while at her feet lies her black cat, Wahb. A conventionalized orange tree, at the left, completes a plate, which, although quite decorative, is also a good example of simplicity, in which it differs from his other more elaborate plates.

Mr. Iorio was long a pupil of Will H. Bradley, in fact he was with him from the beginning of the Wayside Press until Mr. Bradley severed his connection with it, working under his direction at Springfield, Mittineague, and at Cambridge, when the Wayside Press was incorporated with the University Press. After Mr. Bradley left the Press, Mr. Iorio carried on the work of the Wayside Department until some time in 1900, when he decided to open an office of his own.

While with Mr. Bradley, and at the University Press, his work of necessity was fashioned after Mr. Bradley's as closely as possible, but on emerging from the Press his own individuality and originality soon evinced themselves, and he now shows a style distinctively his own, though

perhaps relying more or less on the old German expressions.

Mr. Iorio's work in book covers, catalogues, and the other forms of higher commercial work, is very well and favorably known, and it gives me pleasure to bring to the attention of book-plate collectors the excellence and variety of his book-plate work.

Ex Libris
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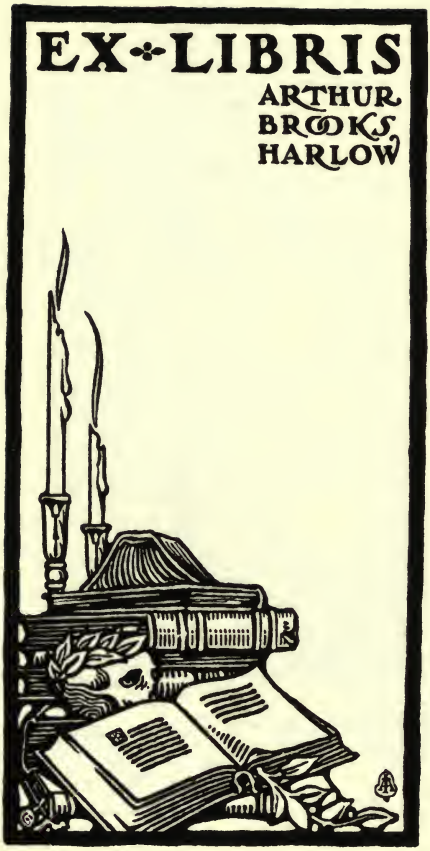
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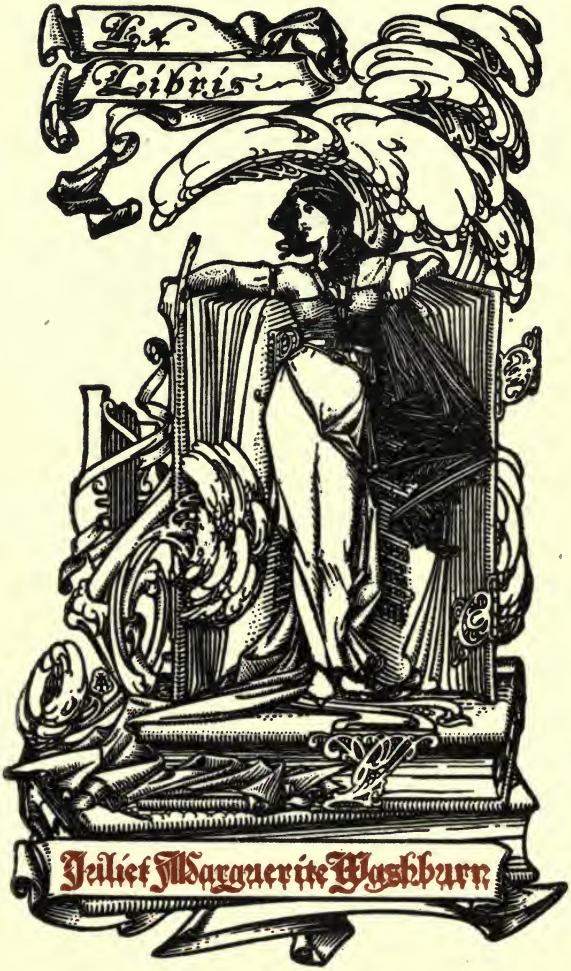
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Ex Libris
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